Andover Theological Seminary. Dec. 18. 1849.

Dear brethren in Christ;

The members of the Society of Inquiry, in this Seminary desire, if it is agreeable with your wishes, to correspond with you. We wish to open a channel of communication with you, through which our mutual sympathies in our Redeemer's cause may mingle. Conscious of sinful tendencies within to become languid in our piety, and feeling the force of seductive temptations from without, we wish to throw around ourselves all the hallowed influences of Christian fellowship. We know that we have brothers wherever there are disciples of our Lord. And in the various Theological Seminaries of our land, there is a large body of Christians, who are peculiarly united with us. Such knowledge enlivens our hope. When we pray that the kingdom of heaven may come upon all the earth, it imparts new strength to our faith, to reflect that so great a number unite with us in this prayer. The very thought that a multitude of good and faithful men have devoted themselves to the same work with us, and that our prayers do not ascend to the throne of grace alone, gives us courage. But we wish to draw closer the bonds of union by actual intercourse. And we trust that a correspondence with other Seminaries will be productive of mutual benefit.

It is our object to communicate and receive such intelligence as may be of interest, with especial reference to the missionary spirit in our respective Seminaries. And it may not be inappropriate to give you some account of this Society

The Society of Inquiry in reference to Foreign Missions, in this Seminary, was one of the first societies of the kind, established in our country. The first, it is believed, was at Williams College in this state. And the members of that, upon coming to this place, to pursue their theological studies, immediately formed a similar association here. They thus planted the germ of an institution, destined to be of great importance in that holy enterprise, which was then just beginning to engage the attention of Christians generally. For many years it was the principle medium through which missionary intelligence was diffused. The monthly essays, prepared by its members, were published; and, going forth throughout the country, bore information and encouragement to the friends of Missions, and stirring appeals to all. But at length this work of diffusing intelligence, could be more conveniently and better done, by the various boards of Commissioners, that had been established. And the society was no longer needed for this purpose. Still there was enough for it to do, in awakening, and keeping alive the missionary spirit among its own members, and by correspondence, wherever its influence extended. But at length, the interest which had sustained it seems to have declined, and there is some reason to believe that its meetings were, for a time, wholly

discontinued. No records have been preserved of the entire period from 1823 to 1844. twenty one years. It is only about two years since it was organized upon its present plan. We now hold public meetings once a month, at which essays are read by members of the Society. These essays are, of course, no longer designed to give the recent intelligence, as those of former days were, but their themes are usually drawn from the past. The missionary enterprise ~~has~~ now forms a part of history; and the essayist may draw from its annals rich lessons of instruction.

Some recent movements in our Society indicate an increase of interest, and promise well for the future. We have changed the time of our meetings so as to accommodate the community around us - and we hope hereafter to receive more countenance and encouragement from that source; while at the same time the influence of the society will be extended beyond the walls of the Seminary. We also design to give the Society more prominance among the exercises of our anniversary - and we shall accordingly endeavor to secure an annual address upon that occasion. But that, from which we may perhaps expect the most substantial benefit, is the correspondence which we are about to resume, (I will not say commence) with our brethren in other Seminaries. We hope to correspond with quite a number of institutions in our own country, and with several in Europe.

These things, together with some others of a more private nature, we regard as hopeful indications, and while we confess with shame, that our devotion to the Saviour falls far short of what he, who gave his life for us, has a right to expect,

still we are encouraged to hope that a more self-sacrificing spirit will ere long prevail. And that the true missionary spirit will become more generally predominant amongst us. If you, brethren, will grant us your prayers, and your aid, in the accomplishment of our purpose, we shall esteem it a great favor- and we hope that, by the divine blessing, we shall be enabled to derive mutual benefit, and contribute to the prosperity of that glorious cause to which we have consecrated our lives. Please favor us with an early answer. May God, Our Heavenly Father grant you the blessings of his grace.

In behalf of the Society,
L. W. Chaney.

To the Society of Inquiry, in
Princeton Theological Seminary.

Society of Inquiry,
Princeton Theological Seminary.
Princeton, New Jersey.